THE 1991 MONTANA DRUG SURVEY

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MBCC
Montana Board of Crime Control

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INTRODUCTION

The Montana Board of Crime Control sponsored a telephone survey during the last week in October and the first two weeks in November in order to assess people's perceptions of the drug problem and illicit use of drugs in Montana. This survey is primarily being used by the Board to assist in developing the state's anti-drug abuse strategy and provide guidance for the dissemination of federal anti-drug abuse funds. A discussion of the technical aspects of the survey, such as sample size, how the sample was selected, and response rates is presented in Appendix A. The following is a summary of study's overall findings:

OVERALL FINDINGS

Montanans currently feel that the Drug Problem is one of the most serious facing America today.

72% felt that drug abuse was one of the top three problems; 31% considered it to be the single most serious one.

Montanans are evenly divided in their opinion about society's ability to win the War on Drugs.

37% expect that 20 years from now drugs will still be a problem, but on a much smaller scale; 30% see it as remaining at about the same level and 30% see it as being a larger problem in the future.

76% believe that the drug problem has <u>not</u> declined in recent years.

Many Montanans believe that the group most vulnerable to drugs is high school students.

43% believe that most drug abuse occurs among high school students and younger.

48% believe the family is the most important group to be enlisted in fighting drugs; 27% feel that the schools are the most important group.

Teenage alcohol abuse is considered to be a larger problem than drug abuse.

81% believe alcohol abuse is more common than drug abuse among high school seniors.

68% feel that parents allowing their teenagers to host a beer party is very serious.

47% believe that two teenagers sharing a marijuana cigarette is very serious.

Montanans believe that the single most effective long range strategy against the drug problem is prevention and education.

> 40% think that drug education and prevention should receive the largest amount of money and effort in future programs to combat drug abuse; 35% believe stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the country would be better.

Montanans believe that law enforcement alone cannot win the War on Drugs, yet they believe that severe punishment is a deterrant to drug abuse.

> 16% believe that a person who uses drugs is very likely to be arrested.

> 10% believe that the arrest and prosecution of drug law violators is the most effective approach to combatting drug abuse.

> 53% believe that sentencing drug dealers to life imprisonment would be very effective in reducing drug crimes.

> 53% believe that using the death penalty on drug dealers would be very effective in reducing drug crimes.

TABLES SHOWING
PROPORTIONAL RESPONSES
TO
INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

TABLE 1
WHAT THREE ISSUES DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE <u>MOST</u> SERIOUS FOR AMERICA AT THIS TIME?

ISSUE	MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN AMERICA TODAY		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Drug Abuse	31.3%	23.6%	16.7%
Economic Problems	18.2	10.0	8.2
Crime	16.7	22.1	18.9
Public Education	10.4	10.0	12.2
Environmental Damage	8.5	9.2	13.4
Alcohol Abuse	7.7	8.7	12.4
Taking Care of the Needy	6.2	15.4	16.9
Total % Answering	99.0%	99.0%	98.7%

TABLE 2
WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT WHERE THE U.S.
WILL BE WITH THE DRUG PROBLEM 20 TO 25 YEARS FROM NOW?

IN 20-25 YEARS, DRUG ABUSE WILL:	PROPORTION RESPONDING
... be eliminated.	0.7%
... decline, but still a problem.	36.6
... continue to be a problem, about as serious at it is now.	30.1
... increase, becoming an even more serious problem.	16.4
... be out of control and seriously threaten our way of life.	13.9
Other	0.5
Total Responding	98.3%

TABLE 3
WHICH <u>ONE</u> OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS
DO YOU THINK CAN DO THE <u>MOST</u> TO HELP
IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS

GROUP	PERCENT RESPONDING
Family	47.8%
Schools	26.9
Police and Courts	9.7
Treatment Centers	4.5
Churches	3.2
Business & Industry	1.5
Other	5.2
Total Responding	99.0%

Note: Questions are paraphased for brevity of presentation; responses are ranked from highest to lowest.

Standard Errors

If the % responding is: 50% or		40% 60%	30% 70%	20% 80%	10% 90%	1% 99%
	50%					
then the estimate can be off as much as, plus or minus:	4.9%	1.2%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%

TABLE 4
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST REFLECTS YOUR VIEW ON HOW TO HANDLE PEOPLE WHO USE ILLEGAL DRUGS?

PERCENT RESPONDING

They should be treated medically, like any person with a physical or emotional problem.	49.5%
They should be arrested and prosecuted.	42.0
They should be left alone unless they are bothering somebody.	4.2
Other	3.5
Total Responding	99.2%

Note: Questions are paraphased for brevity of presentation; responses are ranked from highest to lowest.

Standard Errors

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TABLE 5
WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE THE PROPER RESPONSE BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS FOR A STUDENT WHO IS CAUGHT SELLING DRUGS TO OTHER STUDENTS?

RESPONSE	PROPORTION SUPPORTING
Let the police and courts handle the matter	43.8%
Keep the student in school and provide counselling	37.8
Expel the student from school	7.0
Keep the student in school, but let the parents handle any discipline	4.7
Other	6.5
Total Responding	99.8%

Note: Questions are paraphased for brevity of presentation; responses are ranked from highest to lowest.

		Standard Errors				
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TABLE 6
WHICH METHOD SHOULD RECEIVE THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF MONEY AND EFFORT IN COMBATTING DRUG ABUSE?

STRATEGY	PROPORTION SUPPORTING
Drug Abuse Education and Prevention	40.0%
Stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the county	34.8%
Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation	12.4%
Arrest and Prosecution of Drug Law Violators	10.2%
TOTAL RESPONDING	97.4%

Note: Questions are paraphased for brevity of presentation; responses are ranked from highest to lowest.

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TABLE 7
HOW LIKELY IS SOMEONE TO BE <u>ARRESTED</u> FOR THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES?

ACTIVITY	VERY LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	NOT LIKELY AT ALL
Manufacturing amphetamines	40.0%	43.3%	14.9%
Selling drugs	32.8	52.2	13.9
Allowing one's residence to be used by drug dealers	31.1	44.5	22.9
Growing Marijuana plants	30.1	47.0	21.9
Buying drugs	22.4	50.0	26.1
Using drugs	15.7	42.0	41.5

Note: Questions are paraphased for brevity of presentation; responses are ranked from highest to lowest.

Standard Errors

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TABLE 8
ARE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE?

STATEMENT	TRUE	FALSE
Most drug abuse occurs among kids high school age or younger.	42.5%	<u>56.5%</u>

Between 1982 and 1990, only 10% of the arrests in Montana for drug abuse involved persons under 18 years of age.

"Crack" is a drug made from Marijuana.	6.0	<u>83.3</u>

"Crack" is derived from cocaine and comes in the form of chips, chunks, or "rocks".

Among high school seniors, illegal drug use is more common than alcohol use.	16.4	<u>81.3</u>

In 1990, there were 1,875 juveniles arrested for possession of alcohol in Montana. During the same period, 104 were arrested for drugs.

Illegal drug use seems to have declined in recent years and is still declining.	22.6	<u>75.6</u>

Since 1982, the number of persons arrested for drug violations have increased an average of 7.5% each year.

"Crack" is addictive.	<u>96.3</u>	2.7

"Crack" is smoked. Inhalation of the fumes produces effects that are very fast in onset, very intense, and are quickly over. These effects are often followed within minutes by a "crash," leading to frequently repeated doses and rapid addiction.

Note: "Correct" responses are underlined.

TABLE 9
HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS WOULD BE IN FIGHTING DRUGS?

PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	NOT AT ALL EFFECTIVE
Requiring high school students to tour prisons to learn first hand from inmates what drug abuse has done to them	59.2%	33.1%	7.2%
Putting drug dealers in prison for life with no chance of parole	53.2	34.1	12.2
Enforcing the death penalty for convicted drug dealers	52.5	25.9	20.1
Confiscating the property of convicted drug dealers	22.6	75.6	1.2
Evicting tenants arrested on drug charges	27.1	45.5	26.9
Putting more drug education programs in schools	16.4	81.3	1.7
Improving drug education programs in schools	6.0	83.3	8.5

Note: Questions are paraphased for brevity of presentation; responses are ranked from highest to lowest.

		Standard Errors				
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or	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	99%
then the estimate can be off as much as, plus or minus:	4.9%	1.2%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%

TABLE 10
HOW SERIOUS DO YOU THINK
THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS ARE?

SITUATION	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	NOT SERIOUS
Two police narcotics officers keep and sell some illegal drugs seized during a raid	97.5%	2.0%	0.5%
Two People fly a plane load of cocaine into the U.S. as part of a drug dealing operation run from a South American Country	96.5	2.7	0.5
A person operates a secret drug lab, making and selling illegal drugs	95.8	3.7	0.5
A married couple gives a party at which cocaine is make available to all guests	87.6	10.4	1.7

Note: Questions are paraphased for brevity of presentation; responses are ranked from highest to lowest.

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then the estimate can be off as much as, plus or minus:	4.9%	1.2%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%

TABLE 10 (CONTINUED)
HOW SERIOUS DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS ARE?

SITUATION	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	NOT SERIOUS
A farmer received payment for allowing someone to grow marijuana in a wheat field	72.4	21.6	6.0
Parents allow their 15-year-old to host a beer party for some friends in their home	68.4	27.9	3.7
Two 16-year-olds share a marijuana cigarette	46.5	46.0	7.5
A person gives 6 Valium tablets prescribed for him to a friend who is suffering from anxiety while on vacation	43.5	41.0	14.7

Note: Questions are paraphased for brevity of presentation; responses are ranked from highest to lowest.

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or		50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	99%
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APPENDIX A
SURVEY PROCEDURES

A total of 402 interviews of Montana adults were conducted by Economic Consultants Northwest on behalf of the Montana Board of Crime Control. Telephone numbers were selected using randomized digit dialing procedures from a sample of Montana exchanges. An examination of all the telephone calls made by the interviewers shows a high, but still acceptable, rate of non-responses. To obtain the 402 responses, a total of 1,239 telephone calls were made. Of these, 105 persons 8.5% refused to be interviewed and 263 (21.2%) could not be contacted even after four call backs.

The maximum sampling error for any estimate presented below is + or - 5%. This means that if 50% of the people answered a specific question with a certain answer, then we are 95% sure that between 45% and 55% of all Montanans would answer the question in a similar fashion. As the proportional estimate gets smaller, the sampling error also gets smaller and so does the confidence interval around that estimate.

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